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Assistant Secretary Bertini Receives Leadership Award

On March 1, Assistant Secretary Catherine Bertini became the first administration official to receive the American Public Welfare Association (APWA) Leadership in Human Services Award, an honor traditionally reserved for leading governors and members of Congress.

Bertini was honored for her work as acting assistant secretary for the Family Support Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services, a job in which she supervised the initial implementation of the landmark Family Support Act of 1988.

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Commodities are Nutritious and Tasty



Responding to concern over some USDA commodity foods, FNS Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen ordered up two helpings of the foods within a week.

Two Congressmen--Rep. Tony Hall of Ohio and Rep. Byron Dorgan of North Dakota--had gone on record with criticism of foods provided to low-income people, especially Native Americans. The Congressmen were particularly critical of canned meats provided through the commodity programs, saying the meats were of poor quality and contained too much fat and salt.

Nelsen called for a taste test of the foods March 16 at FNS. She and about 20 other staff members sampled stews, spreads, and casseroles prepared with

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APWA Executive Director A. Sidney Johnson III presented Bertini with the award for "recognition of her positive contributions to human services and her work on behalf of poor children and their families." He praised Bertini for her leadership in drafting regulations for the 1988 welfare reform law "in an open, accessible fashion, involving the states and localities, and in a process that was completed on time."

Bertini said she accepted the award on behalf of "Jane," who she said represents for her "all those women in the country whom we are all able to help by passage of the Family Support Act."

-Photo by Pamela Faith
Public Information Staff

FNS Completes Big Q & A Job

"We will get this done on time," said Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen.

As a result of the fiscal year 1991 House and Senate Appropriations Hearings, 230 questions about our programs were generated. Nelsen promised to answer these questions within 5 days.

FNS gave this project top priority, and through team effort the deadline was met. The Department also completed its review of the Q's and A's and obtained the Office of Management and Budget's clearance within its 24-hour deadline.

Administrator Nelsen thanks everyone for a job well done!



-Story by Frank Gatchell
Budget Division

MWRO Issuance Meeting Issued High Marks

How to get food stamps to people as efficiently as possible was the challenge of a Food Stamp Issuance Conference in Springfield, Illinois. Representatives from five regions, headquarters, and state food stamp issuance offices shared ideas and concerns on centralized issuance of food stamps, mail loss reduction, consolidated reporting, and administrative cost reduction.

Participants also discussed topics ranging from direct mail issuance to the contracting out of issuance to private firms such as check cashers. In addition, participants toured Illinois' unique centralized Direct Mail Issuance Center (DMIC), which stores and issues food stamps.



MWRO State/Federal Operations Assistant Chief Jim Logan and Wisconsin Food Stamp Center Supervisors Gail Riedasch and Linda Ashmore observe the automatic envelope stuffing machine at the Illinois Direct Mail Issuance Center.

According to Maura Wickin, food program specialist for MWRO Food Stamp Program, "It was amazing how everyone continued to interact and share food stamp issuance ideas even during lunch and dinner break, and well into the evening."

-Story by Diana Phios
Photo by David Witt
Federal Operations Chief
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

(Nelsen Continued)

commodity canned beef, pork, chicken, and tuna. "In every instance, the food was good," Nelsen said.

The second taste test came March 21 after the two Congressmen called a press conference to highlight their concerns about the quality of the commodities.

"I knew the food was good," Nelsen said, "so I thought, OK, let's let the press judge for themselves. Let them try the food, and we'll have our staff there to answer their questions." She mobilized the Food Distribution Division (FDD) and Nutrition and Technical Services Division (NTSD) to prepare the food, and the Public Information Staff to organize press coverage.

FNS' combination taste test and press conference took place about an hour after the two Congressmen held their own conference. Most of the media representatives who attended the first came to ours. Nelsen, along with Pat Daniels (NTSD), Acting Associate Administrator George Braley, and Deputy Director David Hallett (Livestock and Seed Division, Agricultural Marketing Service), fielded questions and invited the reporters to sample the food. Several newspaper and television stories resulted from the coverage.

"I think they were impressed," Nelsen said. "This is good, wholesome, nutritious food. It cooks up very nicely. It isn't meant to be eaten right from the can, but fixed with other ingredients."

"We have made steady improvements in the foods," Nelsen added. "The fat and salt levels have been reduced to well below the levels in the average American diet. We're proud of the food we provide, and I think we made it clear to the media that we have something to be proud of."

-Story by Phil Shanholtzer
Photo by Pamela Faith
Public Information Staff

NERO Has Successful Taste Testing Thanks to Rhode Island University

Commodities--how can you use them? Nutritionists from the University of Rhode Island (URI) have developed several recipes; tasty ones at that! And they had the opportunity to showcase a few of them at a taste testing held recently at a NERO joint conference of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs in Newport, Rhode Island.



Conference participants enjoy a lighter moment at a taste testing of dishes developed using TEFAP commodities. Pictured left to right are Anthony Mazzatti, assistant chief distribution officer, Rhode Island; Harold McLean, NERO administrator; John Magnarelli, NERO Special Nutrition Programs director; Betsey Perra, nutrition educator, University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension; William DiGiulio, senior inspector, Rhode Island Distributing Agency; and John Dearstyne, assistant chief, Bureau of Donated Foods, New York.

Nutrition educators from the URI Cooperative Extension Service, at the request of the Department of Human Services and the Rhode Island distributing agent, developed the recipes to help recipients cook with TEFAP commodities. "The work these nutritionists have put into developing these recipes goes a long way toward

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dispelling myths about the commodities and proving what the USDA has known all along--Commodity foods are first-quality, nutritious, and the basic ingredients of some delicious recipes," said NERO Administrator Harold McLean. The "hits" among conference participants were the chili made with canned luncheon meat and cornmeal raisin cookies.

The taste testing culminated a successful NERO conference which featured two agendas. Food Distribution Division staff and state distributing agents benefited from John Page, a warehouse consultant from Denver, who discussed alternate commercial warehousing distribution systems. Concurrently, Child Nutrition staff participated in a detailed review of the "Management Evaluation - Local Level Review" handbook.

-Story and photo by
NERO Public Affairs Staff

\$6 Million Club Plans Conference



Charles Ellis (left) and Phil Turner take a coffee break during the \$6 Million Club quarterly planning meeting.

The \$6 Million Club recently held its quarterly planning meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, to discuss goals

for the annual Error Reduction Conference. SERO Food Stamp Program Director Phil Turner, who was closing speaker at the meeting, gave an in-depth presentation of SERO's Food Stamp Program reorganization.

Representatives from the Southeast and Northeast Regions and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will conduct workshops at the upcoming conference. The aim is for state and county food stamp agencies to share methods of curtailing overissuance and underissuance, because states that exceed the national tolerance rate are subject to sanctions. The conference will be held in Asheville, North Carolina, in May.



Federal and state Food Stamp Program employees discuss goals for the annual Error Reduction Conference at a quarterly planning meeting.

-Story and photos by
SERO Public Affairs Staff

FNS Sponsors Food Stamp Research Conference

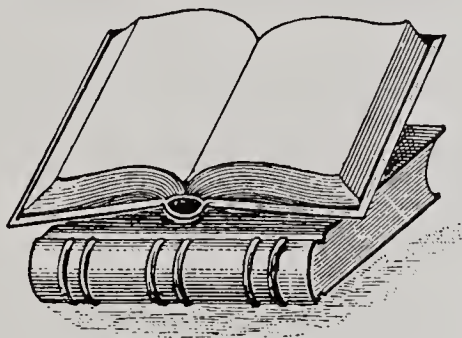
The Office of Analysis and Evaluation (OAE) recently sponsored a conference entitled "Food Stamp Policy Issues: Results from Recent Research." FNS Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen opened the conference, which brought together over 120 analysts and researchers from the Federal Government, the private sector, and the academic community.

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Sessions focused on Food Stamp Program participation rates; the effect of the program on the diet of participants; targeting food stamps to special-needs groups such as the homeless, the elderly, and Native Americans; and the employment and training component of the program.

Assistant Secretary Catherine Bertini introduced and moderated a special luncheon panel of former FNS officials who shared their insights on the relationship between research and policy. Panelists John Bode, Bob Greenstein, Bill Hoagland, and Anna Kondratas described the effects research findings have had on their and other policy officials' decisions, and offered guidance to researchers and analysts on what kind of information is most valuable to policymakers.



Greenstein said the current political environment is "a particularly fruitful time for research and analysis to help all of us work together" to reach the best policy decisions. Bill Hoagland emphasized compromise between policymakers' and researchers' objectives, stating that "research can have a major influence on policy if presented simply and succinctly to policymakers who have limited time and usually limited patience." Kondratas agreed that research can and should be a major influence on policy decisions, explaining that "eventually, people with good data get to make some headway. This headway is longer-lived than policies resulting from passions of the moment."

A monograph is available from Alana Landey, OAE, at FTS 756-3133.

-Story by Alana Landey, Office of Analysis and Evaluation

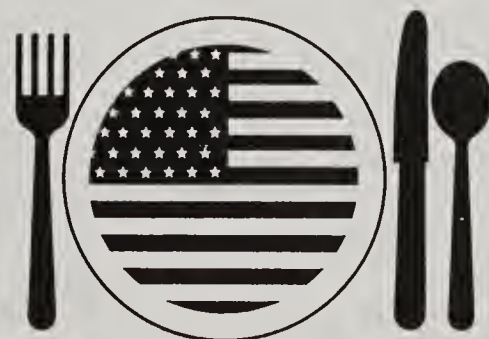
NERO Hosts Biregional Training



Taking a break from the Management Evaluation Local Level Review (MELLR) Training held at NERO are (left to right) Terry Hallberg, Child Nutrition Division branch chief; NERO Administrator Harold McLean; Robert Freiler, MARO Special Nutrition Programs (SNP) director; and John Magnarelli, NERO SNP director. The training, conducted by four representatives from SNP Division, was attended by NERO and MARO staff responsible for MELLR reviews.

"MELLR is really going to improve operation of the School Lunch Program," McLean said. "And this training provided people with the necessary tools to do effective reviews. I also like to see regional office staffs brought together like this. Besides sharing new insights and perspectives on their work, I think it fosters a sense of teamwork and agency spirit."

-Story and photo by
NERO Public Affairs Staff



Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Food Prog. Admin. Spec.	(A)	GS-0120	5/7	05/01/90	90-B	FNS-N
o Math. Statistician	(A)	GS-1529	9/12	05/21/90	90-H-23*	HNIS
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-0630	11/12	04/30/90	90-H-40*	HNIS
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-0493	11/12	04/16/90	90-H-56	HNIS
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-0493	9/11	04/16/90	90-H-59**	HNIS
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-0630	11/12	04/30/90	90-H-63	HNIS
o Supv Food Prog Spec	(FNS-N)	GM-0120	13	04/23/90	90-65	PAD
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-0493	9	04/16/90	90-H-66	HNIS
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-0493	9/11	04/30/90	90-H-67	HNIS
o Secretary Typing	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0318	3/5	04/09/90	90-68	FSP
o Writer-Editor	(A)	GS-1082	9/12	04/30/90	90-69	OGAPI
o Comp. Prog. Analyst	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0334	12	04/30/90	90-70	IRMD

Office Location

HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
 PAD - Program Accountability Division
 FSP - Food Stamp Program
 OGAPI- Office of Governmental Affairs and Public Information
 IRMD - Information Resources Management Division

* - Reannouncement
 ** - Extension of Closing Date

Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources
 (FNS-N) - Food and Nutrition Service-Nationwide
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition Service-Hdqs.



**HAPPY
EASTER!**

Computers for Van Ness

Thank you for your support of Van Ness Elementary School in its Partnership in Education campaign. The Department has collected enough receipts to earn Van Ness a computer from each store.

However, there is one more month to go! Please continue to deposit your receipts in the receptacles located at all of the main entrances to the Administration and South Buildings.

Safeway Stores will officially end its campaign on April 21; Giant Foods program will end on April 28.

Your outstanding contributions and enthusiastic support is very much appreciated and will make a difference in the lives of these students.